City of Woodstock

Speed Limit Policy

Notice Regarding Referenced Materials

This policy references guidance from the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC), including the *Canadian Guidelines for Establishing Posted Speed Limits*, as well as applicable provincial guidance and standards from the Ontario Ministry of Transportation through the *Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM)*. These materials provide guidance for reviewing, establishing, and implementing posted speed limits based on roadway characteristics, surrounding land use, and road user safety. Where applicable, general principles from national and provincial best practices have informed the development of this policy. All referenced materials remain the property of the respective owners.

Acknowledgment of Reference Materials

The City of Woodstock acknowledges that publicly available speed limit policies, technical reports, guidelines, and best practices from various Ontario municipalities and agencies were reviewed during the preparation of this policy. These materials assisted in informing policy structure, terminology, methodology, and best practices related to reviewing and establishing posted speed limits, roadway safety, and traffic operations. Municipal reference materials included documents from the City of Vaughan, County of Lennox and Addington, City of Kawartha Lakes, Township of Essa, City of Cambridge, and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. All referenced materials remain the property of the respective owners.

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1.0 Introduction

Posted speed limits are an important component of roadway safety, mobility, and transportation planning. Appropriate speed limits should reflect roadway design and function, surrounding land use, operating conditions, and the presence of vulnerable road users. Accordingly, this City of Woodstock Speed Limit Policy establishes a consistent framework for reviewing and implementing posted speed limits on roadways within the City of Woodstock's jurisdiction.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a consistent process and framework to review and determine speed limits on the City's road network. This policy aims to:

- Provide a consistent and evidence-based process for speed limit reviews;
- Consider roadway function, land use, operating conditions, and roadway design when establishing speed limits; and
- Support roadway safety for all road users.

3.0 Legislative Framework (or Authority)

Under Section 128 (Rate of Speed) of the Ontario Highway Traffic Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.8 (HTA), the statutory (default) speed limit is 50 km/h in built-up urban areas and 80 km/h in rural areas, unless otherwise posted. In 2017, the province amended section 128 of the HTA, allowing municipalities to establish alternate posted speed limits on roadways under their jurisdiction through municipal by-laws.

Accordingly, all posted speed limits, signage, and pavement markings implemented by the City of Woodstock shall comply with:

- The Highway Traffic Act (HTA);
- Ontario Regulation 615 (Signs);
- Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) Book 5 – Regulatory Signs; and
- Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) Book 11 – Delineation.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 Posted Speed Limit

The maximum lawful speed permitted on a roadway as established by municipal by-law and indicated by regulatory signage.

4.2 Statutory Speed Limit

The default speed limit established by the Highway Traffic Act (HTA) and where no supplementary regulatory speed signage is posted.

4.3 Operating Speed

The speed at which vehicles are observed travelling along a roadway under free-flow conditions. The 85th percentile speed is commonly used as the operating speed.

4.4 85th Percentile Speed

The observed speed where 85% of vehicles travel under free-flowing conditions.

4.5 Design Speed

A selected speed used to determine the geometric design features of a roadway.

4.6 School / Playground Zone

A section of roadway adjacent to a school or playground where reduced speed limits (40 km/h) and warning signage are implemented for the safety of children and pedestrians.

4.7 Community Safety Zone

A section of roadway designated by municipal by-law where public safety is of special concern and where increased penalties apply under the HTA.

4.8 Vulnerable Road Users

Road users at greater risk of injury in traffic environments, including pedestrians, cyclists, children, older adults, and persons using mobility devices.

4.9 Traffic Calming

Physical / operational measures which reduce vehicle speeds and improve roadway safety.

5.0 Speed Limit Review Methodology

The review and establishment of posted speed limits within the City of Woodstock should generally follow the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) Canadian Guidelines for Establishing Posted Speed Limits (2009), together with engineering judgment applied based on the respective site-specific considerations. The review procedure is initiated by a request for a speed study, a speed limit review, or a speed limit reduction. Staff will conduct a preliminary study to determine whether a speed reduction is warranted. The speed limits will be reviewed using the TAC Speed Limit Guidelines to determine whether a change is warranted.

5.1 Request for Speed Limit Review

There are three ways that speed concerns can lead to a review of the posted speed limit on a city road: resident requests, staff-initiated reviews, and council direction.

Residents may submit requests for speed limit review where concerns related to roadway safety, speeding, traffic operations, or vulnerable road users have been identified. The City encourages residents to provide their concerns in writing. Requests should include:

- Resident's name and home address;
- Contact information (phone number and email address);
- The location of concern (street name, address, intersection, etc.);
- Detailed description of the concern;
- The time(s) where the problem typically occurs (morning peak, at night, all day, spring, winter, etc.); and
- Any additional supporting information.

Submission of a request does not guarantee that a speed limit reduction or modification will be implemented. Some requests may warrant further investigation on Traffic Calming measures (see **Section 7.0**).

City staff can undertake speed limit reviews based on traffic data collection, observed operational concerns, collision history, land-use changes, or transportation planning initiatives. City Council may also direct staff to undertake speed limit reviews for specific roadways, corridors, neighbourhoods, or areas where operational or safety concerns have been identified by their constituents.

5.2 Speed Limit Review

The methodology outlined in the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) ***Canadian Guidelines for Establishing Posted Speed Limits*** will be used to assess and establish speed limits for roadways under the City of Woodstock's jurisdiction. The assessment is based on nine (9) engineering factors, as listed below and provided in the **TAC Automated Speed Limit Guidelines** shown in **Appendix A**. The risks associated with the engineering factors determine the appropriate posted speed limit.

- Horizontal geometry;
- Vertical geometry;
- Average lane width;
- Roadside hazards;
- Pedestrian exposure;
- Cyclist exposure;
- Pavement surface;
- Number of intersections with public roads;
- Number of intersections with private access driveways;
- Number of interchanges; and
- On-street parking.

The TAC Guidelines use an automated spreadsheet analysis to evaluate roadway characteristics and risk factors when determining the appropriate posted speed limit. Generally, roadways with greater roadway or operational risk characteristics may warrant lower posted speed limits.

Operating speed, including the 85th percentile speed, should be reviewed as part of the evaluation process to help assess driver behaviour and roadway operating conditions. Speed limits that are significantly lower or higher than prevailing operating speeds may reduce driver compliance and increase speed differentials between vehicles.

The TAC Automated Speed Limit Guidelines are intended to support engineering review and professional judgment. Field observations should also be undertaken to establish the posted speed limits. Where circumstances warrant, staff may consult with a Traffic Engineer, as needed, to further review the recommendation regarding the appropriate posted speed limit. City staff should advise residents or the group of the review's findings and recommendations. City staff should report to City Council on an annual or as-needed basis regarding any potential speed limit changes.

6.0 Special Speed Zones

6.1 School / Playground Zones and Areas

School / Playground Zones and Areas are intended to improve safety for pedestrians and vulnerable road users near schools and playgrounds. The establishment and evaluation of School / Playground Zones and Areas shall be undertaken in accordance with **The City of Woodstock School and Playground Assessment Policy,** as well as the applicable provincial and federal guidance documents. School / Playground Zones within the City of Woodstock are generally posted at 40 km/h unless otherwise determined through engineering review or municipal by-law.

6.2 Community Safety Zones

Community Safety Zones (CSZs) are designated sections of roadway where public safety is of special concern and where increased penalties apply to traffic-related offences under the Highway Traffic Act. The designation and evaluation of CSZs shall be undertaken in accordance with **The City of Woodstock Community Safety Zone Policy**. The implementation of a CSZ does not automatically require a change to the posted speed limit, but it can be considered.

7.0 Traffic Calming Considerations

Lowering posted speed limits alone may not reduce operating speeds or address all roadway safety concerns. Where speed-related concerns are identified, the City of Woodstock may consider additional traffic calming or transportation safety measures, that are consistent with its current **City of Woodstock Traffic Calming Policy**.

8.0 Signage and Implementation

All posted speed limits on roadways under the jurisdiction of the City of Woodstock shall be established through municipal by-law and supported by appropriate regulatory signage. Speed limit signage and pavement markings shall be installed in accordance with the Highway Traffic Act (HTA), Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) Book 5 – Regulatory Signs, and OTM Book 11 – Delineation.

9.0 Monitoring and Review

The City of Woodstock may periodically review posted speed limits, roadway operations, collision history, and transportation safety concerns to ensure that speed limits remain appropriate and effective. Reviews may be undertaken:

- In response to roadway or land use changes;
- Following roadway reconstruction or development;
- Through transportation planning studies;
- Through traffic data collection and monitoring; or
- In response to operational or safety concerns identified by the City, Council, or the public.

This policy may be updated periodically to reflect changes in legislation, engineering guidelines, roadway design practices, or municipal objectives.

10.0 Conclusion

The City of Woodstock Speed Limit Policy establishes a consistent framework for reviewing, evaluating, and implementing posted speed limits; this policy supports evidence-based decision-making that considers roadway function, operating conditions, surrounding land use, and roadway safety to provide the community with a consistent and efficient process for reviewing and implementing posted speed limits throughout the municipal roadway network.

Appendix A

Automated Speed Limit Guidelines

Automated Speed Limit Guidelines

FORM A - Automated Speed Limit Guidelines Spreadsheet

Version: 10-Apr-09

Name of Corridor:					
Segment Evaluated:		to			
Geographic Region:					
Road Agency:					
Road Classification:		Length of Corridor:		m	
Urban / Rural:		Design Speed: (Required for Freeway, Expressway, Highway)		km/h	
Divided / Undivided:		Current Posted Speed: (For information only)		km/h	
Major / Minor:		Prevailing Speed: (85th Percentile - for information only)		km/h	
# Through Lanes Per Direction:		Policy: (Maximum Posted Speed)			

		RISK	Score
A1	**GEOMETRY (Horizontal)**		
A2	**GEOMETRY (Vertical)**		
A3	**AVERAGE LANE WIDTH**		
B	**ROADSIDE HAZARDS**		
C1	**PEDESTRIAN EXPOSURE**		
C2	**CYCLIST EXPOSURE**		
D	**PAVEMENT SURFACE**		
E1	**NUMBER OF INTERSECTIONS WITH PUBLIC ROADS**	*Number of Occurrences*	
	STOP controlled intersection		
	Signalized intersection		
	Roundabout or traffic circle		
	Crosswalk		
	Active, at-grade railroad crossing		
	Sidestreet STOP-controlled or lane		
E2	**NUMBER OF INTERSECTIONS WITH PRIVATE ACCESS DRIVEWAYS**	*Number of Occurrences*	
	Left turn movements permitted		
	Right-in / Right-out only		
E3	**NUMBER OF INTERCHANGES**	*Number of Occurrences*	
	Number of interchanges along corridor		
F	**ON-STREET PARKING**		

Total Risk Score:

Recommended Posted Speed Limit (km/h):

As determined by road characteristics

As determined by policy

The recommended posted speed limit may be checked against the prevailing speeds of the roadway and the road's safety performance.

Comments:

AUTOMATED SPEED LIMIT GUIDELINES SPREADSHEET - SELECTION EXPLANATIONS

2a) FOR RURAL LAND USE: Identify the risk level for each evaluation criteria

A1. Geometry (horizontal alignment)

Classification	Rural		
All	Higher risk	3	More than 6 curves per kilometre
	Medium risk	2	3 to 6 curves per kilometre
	Lower risk	1	Less than 3 curves per kilometre

A2. Geometry (vertical alignment)

Classification	Rural		
All	Higher risk	3	Frequent steep grades (6% or more on 50% of the section or more)
	Medium risk	2	Some steep grades (4% or more on 50% of the section or more)
	Lower risk	1	Generally moderate grades or flat

An undulating road is considered to have medium risk.

A3. Average Lane Width

Classification	Rural		1 lane per direction	2+ lanes per direction
All	Higher risk	3	Available width is narrow compared to typical roadways with the same road classification	Available width is narrow compared to typical roadways with the same road classification
	Medium risk	2	Available width is similar to typical roadways with the same road classification	Available width is similar to typical roadways with the same road classification
	Lower risk	1	Available width is wide compared to typical roadways with the same road classification	Available width is wide compared to typical roadways with the same road classification

Average lane width = available paved surface width per direction, including shoulders and bicycle lanes, divided by the number of auto through lanes

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B. Roadside Hazards

Classification	Rural		
All	Higher risk	3	5 or more hazards per kilometre, or continuous hazards on more than 50% of the segment length, on one or both sides
	Medium risk	2	2 to 5 hazards per kilometre, or continuous hazards on 25 to 50% of the segment length, on one or both sides
	Lower risk	1	Less than 2 hazards per kilometre

" Hazards" refer to any non breakaway fixed object or continuous non recoverable risk located within the clear zone as defined by the TAC Geometric Design Guide for Canadian Roads Table 3.1.3.1.

* A continuous roadside or median barrier along a roadway is considered to have medium risk

Examples of "continuous" hazards: non-recoverable side slopes, rock face, water hazards, row of unprotected trees or utility poles

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C1. Pedestrian Exposure (along the side of the road)

Classification	Rural		
All	Higher risk	3	Roadway is used by pedestrians and no pedestrian facilities are provided
	Medium risk	2	Roadway is used by pedestrians and a shoulder or trail adjacent to the roadway and at the same elevation as the roadway is provided
	Lower risk	1	Roadway is used by pedestrians and physically separated pedestrian facilities (sidewalks; trails away from the road) are available; or, roadway has negligible pedestrian demand
Freeways, Expressways, Highways Only	N/A	0	Pedestrians are legally prohibited on the roadway

For Freeways, Expressways, and Highways only, choose risk level "N/A" when pedestrians are legally prohibited on a roadway

C2. Cyclist Exposure

Classification	Rural		
All	Higher risk	3	Roadway is used by cyclists and no road space is allocated to bikes
	Medium risk	2	Roadway is used by cyclists and wide curb lane or shoulder is provided
	Lower risk	1	Roadway is used by cyclists and a designated bike lane is provided; or, roadway is used by cyclist and no road space is allocated to bikes but roadway has very low traffic volumes; or, roadway has negligible cyclist demand
Freeways, Expressways, Highways Only	N/A	0	Cyclists are legally prohibited on the roadway

For Freeways, Expressways, and Highways only, choose risk level "N/A" when cyclists are legally prohibited on a roadway

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D. Pavement Surface

Classification	Rural		
All	Higher risk	3	Poor or unpaved / gravel
	Medium risk	2	Fair or rough (significant sections with pot holes, rutting, large cracks, etc)
	Lower risk	1	Good or smooth

E1. Number of Intersections with Public Roads

Classification	Rural
All	Use the evaluation methodology in the TABLES worksheet.

Evaluation methodology is presented in TABLE A.

E2. Number of Intersections with Private Access Driveways

Classification	Rural
All	Use the evaluation methodology in the TABLES worksheet.

Evaluation methodology is presented in TABLE B.

E3. Number of Interchanges

Classification	Rural		
All	Higher risk	3	Interchanges are on average less than 1,000 metres apart
	Medium risk	2	Interchanges are on average 1,000 to 2,000 metres apart
	Lower risk	1	Interchanges are on average more than 2,000 metres apart
	N/A	0	No interchanges

F. On-Street Parking

Classification	Rural		
All	Higher risk	3	Parking permitted all day on one or both sides of the roadway
	Medium risk	2	Parking permitted during part of the day on one or both sides of the roadway
	Lower risk	1	No parking allowed; or parking is permitted but rarely if ever actually utilized
	N/A	0	Parking is legally prohibited

AUTOMATED SPEED LIMIT GUIDELINES SPREADSHEET - SELECTION EXPLANATIONS

2b) FOR URBAN LAND USE: Identify the risk level for each evaluation criteria

A1. Geometry (horizontal alignment)

Classification	Urban		
All	Higher risk	3	More than 4 curves per kilometre
	Medium risk	2	2 to 4 curves per kilometre
	Lower risk	1	Less than 2 curves per kilometre

A2. Geometry (vertical alignment)

Classification	Urban		
All	Higher risk	3	Frequent steep grades (6% or more on 50% of the section or more)
	Medium risk	2	Some steep grades (4% or more on 50% of the section or more)
	Lower risk	1	Generally moderate grades or flat

An undulating road is considered to have medium risk.

A3. Average Lane Width

Classification	Urban		1 lane per direction	2+ lanes per direction
All	Higher risk	3	Available width is narrow compared to typical roadways with the same road classification	Available width is narrow compared to typical roadways with the same road classification
	Medium risk	2	Available width is similar to typical roadways with the same road classification	Available width is similar to typical roadways with the same road classification
	Lower risk	1	Available width is wide compared to typical roadways with the same road classification	Available width is wide compared to typical roadways with the same road classification

Average lane width = available paved surface width per direction, including shoulders and bicycle lanes, divided by the number of auto through lanes

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B. Roadside Hazards

Classification	Urban		
All	Higher risk	3	10 or more hazards per kilometre, or continuous hazards on more than 50% of the segment length, on one or both sides
	Medium risk	2	5 to 9 hazards per kilometre, or continuous hazards on 25 to 50% of the segment length, on one or both sides
	Lower risk	1	Less than 5 hazards per kilometre, any continuous hazards extend for less than 25% of the segment length, or curb and gutter

" Hazards" refer to any non breakaway fixed object or continuous non recoverable risk located within the clear zone as defined by the TAC Geometric Design Guide for Canadian Roads Table 3.1.3.1.

* A continuous roadside or median barrier along a roadway is considered to have medium risk

Examples of "continuous" hazards: non-recoverable side slopes, rock face, water hazards, row of unprotected trees or utility poles

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C1. Pedestrian Exposure (along the side of the road)

Classification	Urban		
All	Higher risk	3	Roadway is used by pedestrians and no pedestrian facilities are provided
	Medium risk	2	Roadway is used by pedestrians and a shoulder or trail adjacent to the roadway and at the same elevation as the roadway is provided
	Lower risk	1	Roadway is used by pedestrians and physically separated pedestrian facilities (sidewalks; trails away from the road) are available; or, roadway has negligible pedestrian demand
Freeways, Expressways, Highways Only	N/A	0	Pedestrians are legally prohibited on the roadway

For Freeways, Expressways, and Highways only, choose risk level "N/A" when pedestrians are legally prohibited on a roadway

C2. Cyclist Exposure

Classification	Urban		
All	Higher risk	3	Roadway is used by cyclists and no road space is allocated to bikes
	Medium risk	2	Roadway is used by cyclists and wide curb lane or shoulder is provided
	Lower risk	1	Roadway is used by cyclists and a designated bike lane is provided; or, roadway is used by cyclist and no road space is allocated to bikes but roadway has very low traffic volumes; or, roadway has negligible cyclist demand
Freeways, Expressways, Highways Only	N/A	0	Cyclists are legally prohibited on the roadway

For Freeways, Expressways, and Highways only, choose risk level "N/A" when cyclists are legally prohibited on a roadway

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D. Pavement Surface

Classification	Urban		
All	Higher risk	3	Poor or unpaved / gravel
	Medium risk	2	Fair or rough (significant sections with pot holes, rutting, large cracks, etc)
	Lower risk	1	Good or smooth

E1. Intersection Density (Including midblock crosswalks)

Classification	Urban
All	Use the evaluation methodology in the TABLES worksheet.

Evaluation methodology is presented in TABLE A.

E2. Access Density (Including private driveways, and access to stores and businesses)

Classification	Urban
All	Use the evaluation methodology in the TABLES worksheet.

Evaluation methodology is presented in TABLE B.

E3. Interchange Density

Classification	Urban		
All	Higher risk	3	Interchanges are on average less than 1,000 metres apart
	Medium risk	2	Interchanges are on average 1,000 to 2,000 metres apart
	Lower risk	1	Interchanges are on average more than 2,000 metres apart
	N/A	0	No interchanges

F. On-Street Parking

Classification	Urban		
All	Higher risk	3	Parking permitted all day on one or both sides of the roadway
	Medium risk	2	Parking permitted during part of the day on one or both sides of the roadway
	Lower risk	1	No parking allowed; or parking is permitted but rarely if ever actually utilized
	N/A	0	Parking is legally prohibited